

1870

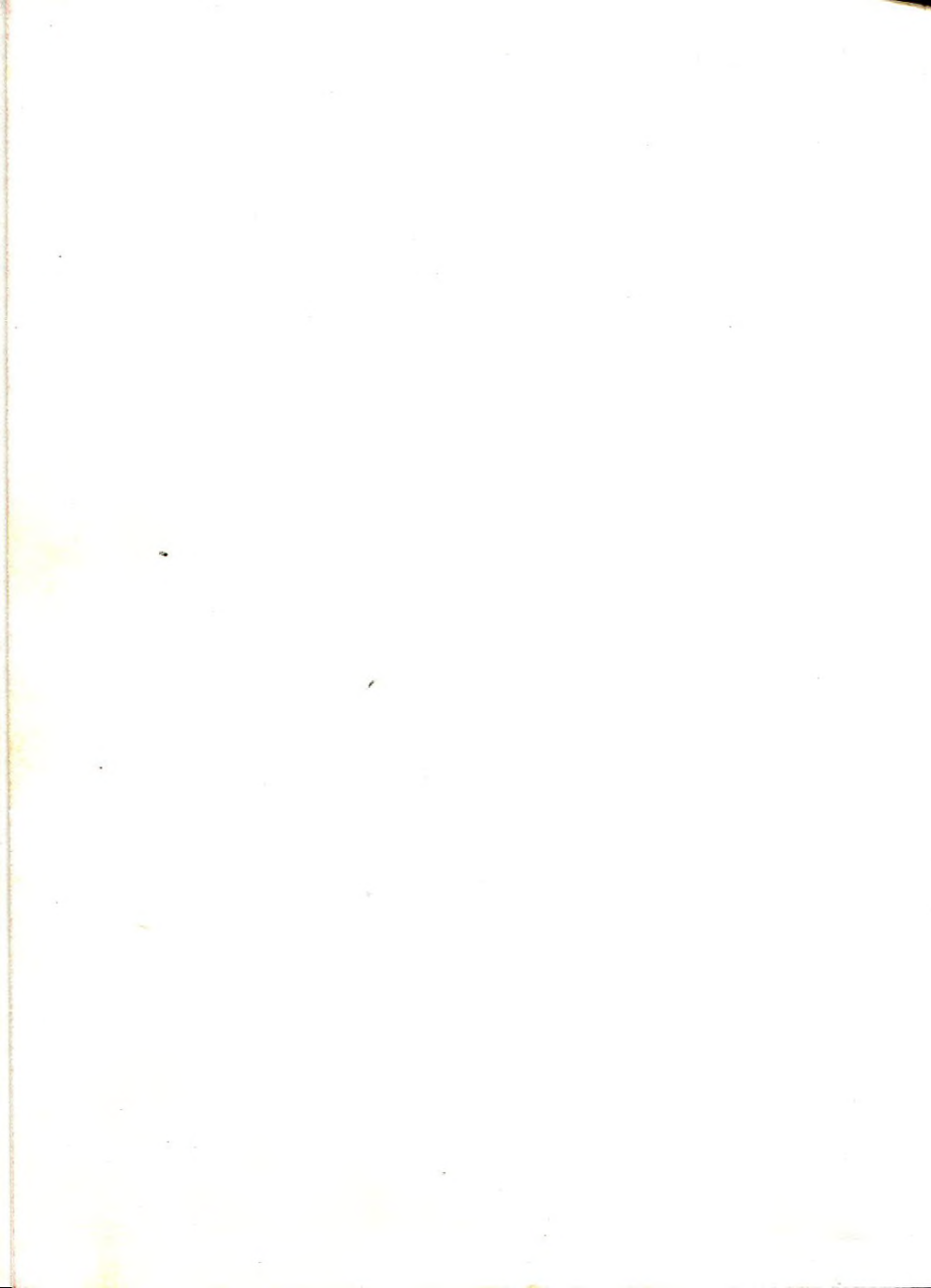


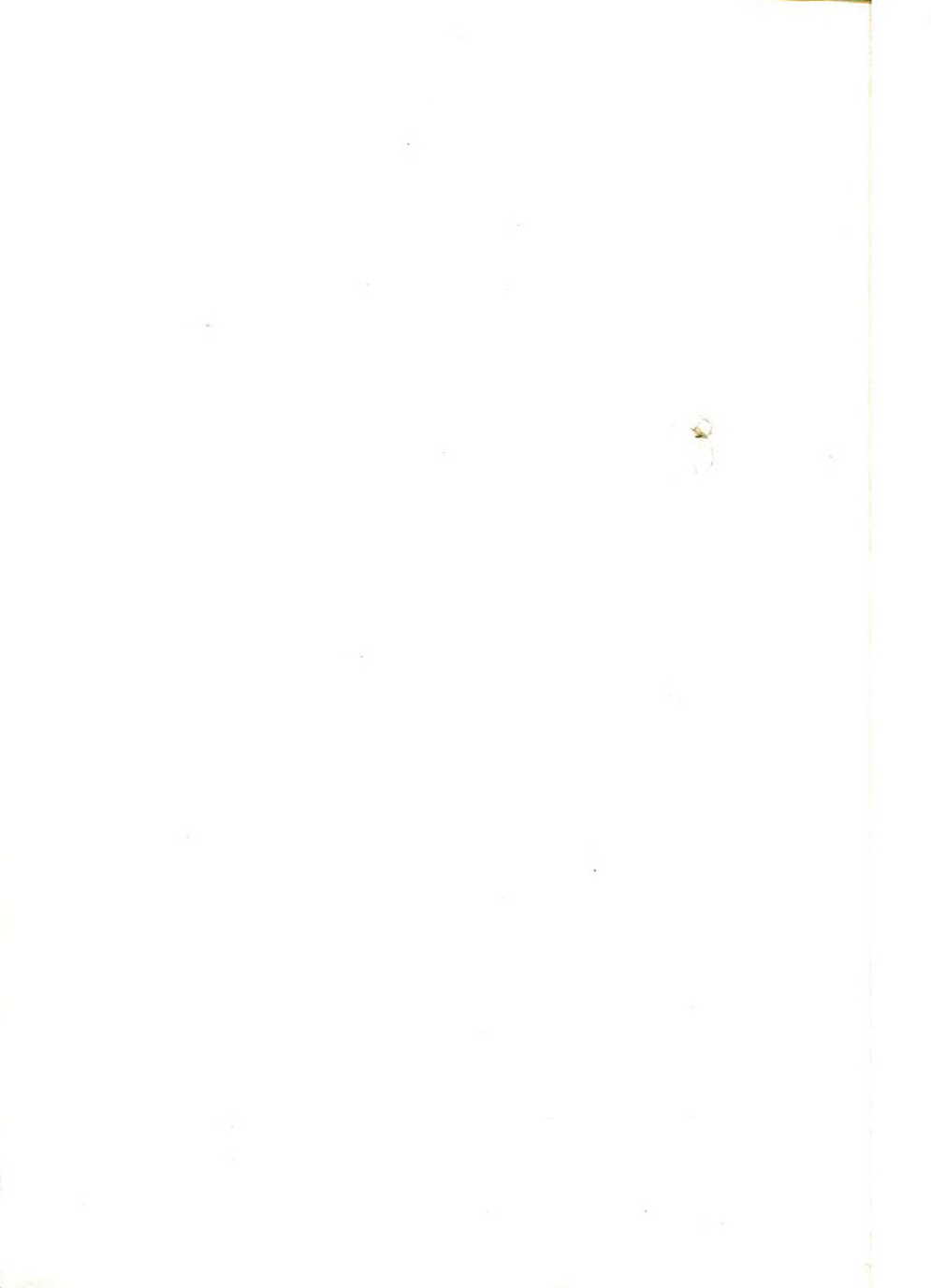
1960

IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE BIRTH OF LENIN

**LENIN**  
**ON**  
**WAR AND PEACE**

COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF BRITAIN  
(MARXIST-LENINIST)  
155 FORTRESS ROAD  
TUFNELL PARK  
LONDON NW5







**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**



**LENIN**  
**ON**  
**WAR AND PEACE**

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
PEKING 1960

First Edition September 1960  
Second Edition October 1960

Published in conformity with the  
Chinese edition prepared by the Peo-  
ple's Publishing House, Peking, 1960.

*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

## CONTENTS

I. HOW MARXISTS LOOK AT WAR	1
Unswervingly Denouncing Wars, Communists Know That Wars Are Inevitable as Long as Classes Exist	1
War Is Politics Continued by Other Means	2
Do Not Be Unqualified Opponents of All War; the Fundamental Question Is the Class Character of War	7
The Crime of Imperialist War Is Bound to Promote the Revolutionization of the Masses	14
Victory or Defeat in War Is Conditioned in the Final Analysis by the Will of the Masses	18
II. MODERN WAR IS BORN OF IMPERIALISM	24
War Is an Inevitable Product of Capitalism	24
Imperialist Peace Is the Continuation of the Imperialist Politics of War	29
Kautsky Covered Up the Class Character of War and Peace and Joined the Bourgeoisie	34

III. THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES CONSISTENTLY STAND FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE	37
The Socialist Countries Systematically Carry On a Policy of Peace	37
To Forbid Making Any Peace at All with Im- perialists Is an Unsound View	45
The Capitalists Will Seek Pretexts for Making War and We Must Be Prepared for Any Eventuality	50
IV. PEACE CAN BE WON ONLY BY STRUGGLE	53
Whoever Thinks That the Bourgeoisie Would Bring Peace to Us on a Platter Is a Completely Naive Person	53
Obstacles to Peace Are on the Side of Imperialism	54
When You Beat the Enemy He Wants to Come to Terms	55
The Struggle for Peace Must Be Linked with the Revolutionary Struggle	58
V. THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IS AN ACTIVE FACTOR IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND FOR THE OVERTHROW OF IMPERIALISM	63
VI. SOCIALIST SOCIETY ALONE WILL SAVE MANKIND FROM WARS	67

## **I. HOW MARXISTS LOOK AT WAR**

**UNSWERVINGLY DENOUNCING WARS, COMMUNISTS  
KNOW THAT WARS ARE INEVITABLE  
AS LONG AS CLASSES EXIST**

Social-Democracy has never regarded and does not regard war from a sentimental point of view. Unswervingly denouncing wars as a brutal method of deciding the disputes of mankind, Social-Democracy knows that wars are inevitable as long as society is divided into classes, as long as the exploitation of man by man exists. And in eliminating this exploitation we will not be able to get by without wars which the exploiting, dominating and oppressing classes always and everywhere begin themselves.

From "The Revolutionary Army and the  
Revolutionary Government" (published in  
*Proletarii*, No. 7, July 10, 1905).



The Socialists have always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous and bestial. Our attitude towards war, however, differs in principle from that of the bourgeois pacifists and Anarchists. We differ from the first in that we understand the inseparable connection between wars on the one hand and class struggles inside of a country on the other, we understand the impossibility of eliminating wars without eliminating classes and creating Socialism, and in that we fully recognize the justice, the progressivism and the necessity of civil wars, i.e., wars of an oppressed class against the oppressor, of slaves against the slave-holders, of serfs against the landowners, of wage-workers against the bourgeoisie. We Marxists differ both from pacifists and Anarchists in that we recognize the necessity of an historical study of each war individually, from the point of view of Marx's dialectical materialism.

From "Socialism and War"  
(July-August 1915).

#### **WAR IS POLITICS CONTINUED BY OTHER MEANS**

"War is politics continued by other (i.e., forcible) means."

This famous dictum belongs to one of the profoundest writers on military questions, Clausewitz. Rightly, the Marxists have always considered this axiom as the theoretical foundation for their understanding of the meaning of every war. It is from this very standpoint that Marx and Engels regarded wars.

Apply this idea to the present war. You will find that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Russia, conducted a policy of colonial robbery, of suppressing labour movements, of oppressing foreign nations. Such a policy, and no other one, is being pursued also in the present war. Notably in Austria and in Russia the policy of both peace and war times consists in the enslavement of nations, not in their liberation. On the contrary, in China, Persia, India and other dependent nations we note in the last decades a policy of national awakening, tens and hundreds of millions of people striving to liberate themselves from under the yoke of the reactionary "great" nations. War growing out of this historic basis, even at the present time, can be of a bourgeois progressive nature, a war for national liberation.

Ibid.

It has already been said that war is the continuation of politics. We have experienced this in our own war. Imperialist war, which was the continuation of the politics of the imperialists, the ruling classes, the landlords and capitalists, aroused hostility among the popular masses and was the best means of revolutionizing these masses. Here with us in Russia it made easier the overthrow of the monarchy, and the overthrow of landlord landownership and the bourgeoisie, which took place with unheard-of ease only because the imperialist war was the continuation, the intensification, the insolent exposure of imperialist politics. And our war was the continuation of our communist politics, the politics of the proletariat. Up to now we read among the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries and hear from non-party and wavering elements: "You promised peace, but gave war; you deceived the toiling masses." But we say that the toiling masses, although they did not study Marxism, nevertheless, because of their class instinct as oppressed people, people who have for decades felt on their own backs what is a landlord and a capitalist, have excellently mastered the difference between an imperialist and civil war. This dif-

ference between wars is understandable to all those who have experienced decades of years of oppression on their own backs. Imperialist war was the continuation of imperialist politics. It set the masses against their rulers. Civil war on the other hand against the landlords and capitalists was the continuation of the politics of overthrowing these landlords and capitalists, and with each month the development of this war strengthened the ties of the toiling masses with the proletariat which is leading this war.

From "The Political Report of the Central Committee to the Eighth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P. (B.)" (December 2, 1919).

How, then, can the "real nature" of a war be ascertained; how can it be determined? War is the continuation of politics. We must study the politics that preceded the war, the politics that led to and brought about the war. If the politics were imperialist politics, i.e., politics in the interests of finance capital, of the robbery and oppression of colonies and foreign countries, then the war that emerged from these politics is an imperialistic war. If the politics were national-liberation politics, i.e.,



the expression of a mass movement against national oppression, then the war that emerged from these politics is a war for national liberation.

The philistine does not understand that war is a "continuation of politics," and therefore limits himself to saying, "the enemy is attacking," "the enemy is invading my country," without trying to understand *why*, by *which* class, and for *what* political object the war is being conducted.

From "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'" (August-October 1916).

The position, however, is that to understand the present war we must first take a general view of the policies of the European powers as a whole. We have not to take individual examples, or individual cases, which can always be easily torn out of the context of social phenomena and are valueless because an opposite example can also be easily cited. No, we have to take the entire policy of the entire system of European states in their economic and political interrelation, if we are to understand how this system steadily and inevitably gave rise to the present war.

From "War and Revolution"  
(May 14, 1917).

**DO NOT BE UNQUALIFIED OPPONENTS OF ALL WAR;  
THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION IS THE  
CLASS CHARACTER OF WAR**

From the viewpoint of Marxism, i.e., contemporary scientific Socialism, the main question, when Socialists discuss how to assess a war and what attitude to adopt towards it, is what the war is being waged for, what classes prepared it and shaped its course. We Marxists do not belong to the category of unqualified opponents of all war. We say: our aim is to achieve the socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man, and of one nation by other nations, will inevitably eliminate every possibility of war whatsoever. But in the war for this socialist system of society we shall inevitably come up against conditions under which the class struggle within each separate nation may interweave with a war fought between different nations that is engendered by this very class struggle. Hence, we cannot rule out the possibility of revolutionary wars, i.e., wars resulting from the class struggle, waged by revolutionary classes, and of direct and immediate revolutionary

significance. Still less can we rule this out when we remember that though the history of European revolutions during the last century, during, say, 125 to 135 years, includes wars of which the majority have been reactionary, it also includes revolutionary wars, such as the war of the French revolutionary masses against united monarchist, backward, feudal and semi-feudal Europe. At the present time, also, no deception of the masses is more widespread in Western Europe, and latterly here in Russia, too, than that of referring to the example of revolutionary wars. There are wars and wars. We have to be clear as to what historical conditions gave rise to the present war, what classes are waging it, and for what ends.

Ibid.

Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be Socialists, be opposed to all war.

In the first place, Socialists have never been, nor can they be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the imperialist "Great" Powers has become thoroughly reactionary, and we regard the war which *this* bourgeoisie is now waging as a reactionary slave-owners' and criminal war. But what



about a war *against* this bourgeoisie? What about a war for liberation waged by colonial peoples, for instance, who are oppressed by and dependent upon this bourgeoisie? In the theses of the "International" group, §5, we read: "In the era of this unbridled imperialism there can be no more national wars of any kind." This is obviously wrong.

The history of the twentieth century, this century of "unbridled imperialism," is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the peoples of the world, with our habitual, despicable European chauvinism, call "colonial wars" are often national wars, or national rebellions of those oppressed peoples. One of the main qualities of imperialism is that it hastens the development of capitalism in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact. It inevitably follows from this that imperialism must often give rise to national wars.

.....

Secondly, civil wars are also wars. Anyone who recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable

continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, means sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution.

Thirdly, the victory of Socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. On the contrary, it presupposes such wars. The development of capitalism proceeds very unevenly in the various countries. It cannot be otherwise under the commodity production system. From this it inevitably follows that Socialism cannot be victorious simultaneously *in all* countries. It will be victorious first in one, or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This must not only create friction, but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the victorious proletariat of the socialist country. If we waged war under such circumstances, it would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie.

From "The Military Programme of the  
Proletarian Revolution" (September 1916).

Socialism is opposed to violence against nations. That is indisputable. But Socialism is opposed to violence against men in general. Apart from Christian-Anarchists and Tolstoyans, however, no one has yet drawn the conclusion from this that Socialism is opposed to *revolutionary* violence. Hence, to talk about "violence" in general, without examining the conditions which distinguish reactionary from revolutionary violence, means being a petty bourgeois who renounces revolution, or else it means simply deceiving oneself and others by sophistry.

The same holds good about violence against nations. Every war is the exercise of violence against nations, but that does not prevent Socialists from being in *favour* of a revolutionary war. The class character of the war—that is the fundamental question which confronts a Socialist (if he is not a renegade). The imperialist war of 1914-18 is a war between two coalitions of the imperialist bourgeoisie for the partition of the world, for the division of the booty, and for the plunder and strangulation of small and weak nations. This was the appraisal of the war given in the Basle Manifesto in 1912, and since then it has been confirmed by facts.

Whoever departs from this point of view ceases to be a Socialist.

If a German under Wilhelm, or a Frenchman under Clemenceau, says: "As a Socialist, I have the right and it is my duty to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy," he argues not like a Socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a *petty-bourgeois nationalist*. Because in this argument the revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital disappears, the appraisal of the war as a *whole* from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat disappears, that is, internationalism disappears, and all that remains is a miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. My country is being wronged, that is all I care about — this is what this argument reduces itself to, and that is why it is petty-bourgeois nationalist narrow-mindedness. It is the same as if in regard to individual violence, violence against an individual, one were to argue that Socialism is opposed to violence and therefore I would rather be a traitor than go to prison.

. . . . .



The Socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: "The character of the war (whether reactionary or revolutionary) is not determined by who attacked or whose territory the 'enemy' has occupied; it is *determined by the class* that is waging the war, and the politics of which this war is a continuation. If the war is a reactionary imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world coalitions of the imperialist, violent, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the *world proletarian revolution* as the *only* escape from the horrors of a world war. I must argue, not from the point of view of 'my' country (for this is the argument of a poor, stupid, nationalist philistine who does not realize that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution."

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (October-November 1918).

To recognize defence of one's fatherland means recognizing the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for emancipation. We do not recognize any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its class rule, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of Socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and extending Socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy."

From " 'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" (May 5, 1918).

**THE CRIME OF IMPERIALIST WAR IS BOUND TO  
PROMOTE THE REVOLUTIONIZATION OF THE  
MASSES**

For many years prior to the war the Socialists of all countries pointed out, and solemnly declared at their congresses, that not only would a war between advanced countries be an enormous crime, but that such a war, a war for the partition of the colonies and

the division of the spoils of the capitalists, would involve a complete rupture with the latest achievements of civilization and culture, and that it might, and inevitably would, undermine the very foundations of human society. Because it is for the first time in history that the most powerful achievements of technology are being applied on such a scale, so destructively and with such energy, for the extirpation of millions of human lives. When all productive forces are being thus devoted to the service of war, we see that the most gloomy prophecies are being fulfilled and that more and more countries are falling a prey to retrogression, starvation and a complete decline of productive forces.

I am therefore led to recall how justified Engels, one of the great founders of scientific Socialism, was when in 1887 he wrote that a European war would not only result, as he expressed it, in crowns falling from crowned heads by the dozen without anybody to pick them up, but that the war would also lead to brutalization, degradation and retrogression of the whole of Europe; and that, on the other hand, the war would result either in the domination of the working class or in the creation of the conditions which would render its domination indispen-



sable. On this occasion the co-founder of Marxism expressed himself with extreme caution, for he clearly saw that if history took this course, the result would be the collapse of capitalism and the extension of Socialism, and that a more painful and severe transition period, greater want and a severer crisis, disruptive of all productive forces, one could not imagine.

From "On Combating the Famine, Report to a Joint Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies, and the Trade Unions" (June 4, 1918).

Imperialism has put the fate of European civilization at stake: this war, if there does not follow a series of successful revolutions, will soon be followed by other wars; the fable of the "last war" is an empty, harmful fable, a philistine "myth" (to use the correct expression of the *Golos*). If not today, then certainly tomorrow; if not during the present war, then after it; if not in this war, then in the following one, the proletarian banner of civil war will rally not only hundreds of thousands of enlightened workers, but also millions of semi-proletarians and petty-bourgeois who are now being

fooled by chauvinism and who, besides being frightened and benumbed by the horrors of the war, will also be enlightened, taught, aroused, organized, hardened and prepared for a war against the bourgeoisie both of "their own" and of the "foreign" countries.

From "Position and Tasks of the Socialist International" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 33, November 1, 1914).

The millions of victims who will fall in the war, and as a consequence of the war, will not fall in vain. The millions who are starving, the millions who are sacrificing their lives in the trenches, are not only suffering, they are also gathering strength, are pondering over the real cause of the war, are becoming more determined and are acquiring a clearer revolutionary understanding. Rising discontent of the masses, growing ferment, strikes, demonstrations, protests against the war—all this is taking place in *all* countries of the world. *And this is the guarantee that the European War will be followed by the proletarian revolution against capitalism.*

From "Speech Delivered at an International Meeting in Berne" (February 8, 1916).

The European War brought this great benefit to international Socialism, that it clearly exposed the full extent of the rottenness, meanness and baseness of opportunism, thus giving a splendid impulse to the cleansing of the workers' movement of the manure accumulated over the decades of the epoch of peace.

From "Letter to A.M. Kollontai"  
(end of December 1914).

**VICTORY OR DEFEAT IN WAR IS CONDITIONED IN  
THE FINAL ANALYSIS BY THE WILL OF THE  
MASSES**

In every war, victory is conditioned in the final analysis by the spiritual state of those masses who shed their blood on the field of battle. Conviction of the justice of the war, consciousness of the necessity to sacrifice their lives for the good of their brothers raises up the spirits of the soldiers and makes them endure unheard-of burdens. The tsarist generals say that our Red Army men endure such hardships as the army of the tsarist system would never have been able to endure. This is explained by the fact that every worker and peasant, placed under arms, knows what he is fighting

for and consciously sheds his blood in the name of the triumph of justice and Socialism.

This comprehension by the masses of the aims and reasons of the war has an immense significance and guarantees victory.

From "Speech at the Broad Conference of Workers' and Red Armymen in the Rogozhsky-Simonovsk District" (May 13, 1920).

To drive the people against a regular army equipped with the highest technique — this is criminal, and that is what we have taught as Socialists. The war, after all, has taught us much, not only that people suffered but also that the ascendancy is taken by him who has the highest technique, degree of organization and discipline and the best machines; the war taught this, and it is fine that it did. We must learn that, without machines, without discipline, it is impossible to live in modern society — one must either master higher technique or be crushed.

From "Concluding Word on the Report on the Ratification of the Peace Treaty at the Fourth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (March 15, 1918).



Here we undoubtedly have practical proof of the fact that the united forces of workers and peasants who have been emancipated from the yoke of the capitalists can perform real miracles. Here we have proof in practice that when a revolutionary war really does attract and interest the oppressed toiling masses, when it imparts to them the consciousness that they are fighting exploiters — such a revolutionary war calls forth the power and ability to perform miracles.

I think that what the Red Army has accomplished, its struggle and the history of its victory, will be of colossal and epochal significance for all the peoples of the East. It will show the peoples of the East that, weak as they may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who employ in the struggle all the marvels of technology and the art of war — nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of toilers and exploited, harbours within it such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable in terms not only of the prospects of the international revolution, but also of the direct military experience in

Asia, in Siberia, the experience of the Soviet Republic which had suffered the armed invasion of all the powerful imperialist countries.

From "Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East" (November 22, 1919).

He wins in war who has the greater reserves, the greater sources of strength, the greater endurance in the mass of its people.

We have more of all of this than the Whites have, and more than "universally-mighty" Anglo-French imperialism, that colossus with feet of clay. We have more of this because we can draw on and can go on drawing for a long time more and more deeply from among the workers and labouring peasants, from among those classes which were oppressed by capitalism and which everywhere comprise the overwhelming majority of the population. We can draw on this most extensive of reservoirs because it gives us its leaders who are the most sincere, the most steeled in the hardships of life, the closest to the workers and peasants in the cause of building Socialism.

Our enemies, whether the Russian bourgeoisie or the world bourgeoisie, have nothing even remotely like this reservoir; the ground beneath their feet is quaking more and more; their former supporters from among the workers and peasants are leaving them in ever greater numbers.

That is why, in the final analysis, the victory of the world Soviet power is assured and inevitable.

From "The Results of the Party Week in Moscow and Our Tasks" (October 21, 1919).

Comrades, two years ago, when the imperialist war was still raging, it seemed to all the supporters of the bourgeoisie in Russia, to the masses of the people and, I dare say, to most of the workers in other countries, that the uprising of the Russian proletariat, their conquest of political power was a bold but hopeless enterprise. It seemed at that time that world imperialism was such a tremendous and invincible force that it was stupid of the workers of a backward country to attempt an uprising against it. Now, however, as we glance back over the past two years, we see that even our opponents are increasingly admitting that we were right. We see that imperialism, which seemed such an insu-



perable colossus, has proved before the whole world to be a colossus with feet of clay, and the two years through which we have passed and during which we have had to fight, mark with ever-growing clarity the victory not only of the Russian, but also of the international, proletariat.

.....  
Now we know perfectly well that all the military forces sent against us have been directed from a definite source. We know that the imperialists have given them all the military supplies, all the arms needed; we know that they have handed over their global navies in part to our enemies, and now are doing all they can to help and get forces ready both in the south of Russia and in Archangel. But we know perfectly well that all these seemingly huge and invincible forces of international imperialism are unreliable, and hold no terrors for us, that at the core they are rotten, that they are making us stronger and stronger, and that this added strength will enable us to win victory on the outer front and to make it a thoroughgoing one.

From "Two Years of Soviet Rule"  
(November 7, 1919).

## **II. MODERN WAR IS BORN OF IMPERIALISM**

### **WAR IS AN INEVITABLE PRODUCT OF CAPITALISM**

Modern war is born of imperialism. Capitalism has reached this highest stage. The productive forces of society and the dimensions of capital have outgrown the narrow framework of separate national states. Hence the striving of the Great Powers to enslave other nations, to seize colonies as sources of raw material and places for the export of capital. The whole world is merging into a single economic organism; the whole world is divided up among a handful of Great Powers. The objective conditions for Socialism have fully matured and the present war is a war of the capitalists for privileges and monopolies to postpone the collapse of capitalism.

From "Draft Resolution of the Zimmerwald Left" (before August 20, 1915).

. . . This war was caused inevitably by that development of enormously big capitalism, particularly banking, which led to the situation where about four banks in Berlin and five or six in London dominate the whole world, taking everything to themselves, bolstering their financial policies with all the armed forces and finally, coming into conflict in an unexampled and ferocious struggle because there was no way of further advance by the method of free seizure. Either one or the other must give up the mastery of its colonies. Such questions are not decided voluntarily in this world of capitalists. This can only be decided by war.

From "War and Revolution"  
(May 14, 1917).

What is our programme? To win Socialism. At the present stage of the world war there is no way out of it except by the victory of Socialism. But many people do not understand this. Now the majority of mankind are against the bloody slaughter, but cannot understand that it is directly connected with the capitalist system. The horrors of the present war are evident even to the bourgeoisie, but they are not the ones to connect the end of the

war with the end of the capitalist system. . . . This main idea, however, has always distinguished the Bolsheviks and revolutionary Socialists of all other countries from those who want to bring peace on earth while retaining the capitalist system inviolate.

. . . . .  
When, however, we speak of the present European War and condemn it, we do so only because it is waged by an oppressing class.

What are the aims of the present war? If we are to believe the diplomats in all countries, it is being waged by France and Britain in defence of small nationalities against barbarians, the German Huns; by Germany it is being waged against Cossack barbarians who are threatening the cultured German people, and in defence of the fatherland against enemies attacking it.

But we know that this war was prepared, drew ever closer, and was inevitable. It was just as inevitable as war is between the United States and Japan. What made it inevitable?

The fact that capitalism has concentrated the world's wealth in the hands of individual states, has divided up the earth to the last bit. Any further



division, any further enrichment can only take place at the expense of others, by one state gaining at the expense of another. Force alone can decide the issue—hence war among the global vultures became inevitable.

Till now two principal concerns have headed the present war—Britain and Germany. Britain was the strongest colonial country. Although Britain's own population is not more than 40 millions, the population of its colonies exceeds 400 millions. Since distant times, by right of might, it has seized the colonies of others, seized enormous territory, and benefited by their exploitation. Economically, however, it has fallen behind Germany during the past fifty years. The industry of Germany has outstripped that of Britain. Large-scale state capitalism has combined in Germany with the bureaucracy, and Germany has beaten the record.

The contest for supremacy between these two giants could not be decided except by force.

Time was when Britain, by right of might, seized lands from Holland, Portugal, etc.; today, however, Germany has come on the scene and declared that its turn has come to get rich at somebody else's expense.



That is the issue: it is a fight to divide the world between the strongest. And since both sides have capital running into hundreds of millions, the fight between them has become worldwide.

From "Speech at a Meeting in the Poly-technical Museum" (August 23, 1918).

Marxists have never forgotten that violence will be an inevitable accompaniment of the collapse of capitalism on its full scale and of the birth of a socialist society. And this violence will cover a world historical period, a whole era of wars of the most varied kinds — imperialist wars, civil wars within the country, the interweaving of the former with the latter, national wars, the emancipation of the nationalities crushed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers which will inevitably form various alliances with each other in the era of vast state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates. This is an era of tremendous collapses, of wholesale military decisions of a violent nature, of crises. It has already begun, we see it clearly — it is only the beginning.

From "Report on Revising the Programme and Name of the Party, Delivered at the Seventh Congress of the R. C. P. (B.)" (evening of March 8, 1918).

## IMPERIALIST PEACE IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE IMPERIALIST POLITICS OF WAR

War is the continuation, by forcible means, of the politics pursued by the ruling classes of the belligerent Powers long before the outbreak of war. Peace is a continuation of the *very same* politics, with a *registration* of the changes brought about in the relation of forces of the antagonists as a result of military operations.

From "The 'Peace Programme'" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 52, March 25, 1916).

Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German "Marxist," Kautsky, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, giving rise to alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle out of *one and the same* basis of

imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics. But in order to pacify the workers and to reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, wise Kautsky *separates* one link of a single chain from the other, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay, ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliance of *all* the Powers for the "pacification" of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another "peaceful" general alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, *etc., etc.* Instead of showing the living connection between periods of imperialist peace and periods of imperialist war, Kautsky presents the workers with a lifeless abstraction in order to reconcile them to their lifeless leaders.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

European capital is speculating on peace. The bourgeoisie not only in Russia but in Europe has begun to understand the connection between war and revolution, has begun to fear the really pop-

ular and victorious movement against tsarism. The bourgeoisie wants to preserve the "social order" in a society based on exploitation, from excessive shocks, wants to preserve the Russian monarchy in the form of a constitutional or allegedly constitutional monarchy, and so the bourgeoisie is speculating on peace in anti-proletarian and anti-revolutionary interests. This undoubted fact clearly shows us how even such a "simple" and clear question as the question of war and peace, cannot be correctly put if we leave out of account class antagonism in modern society, if we leave out of account the fact that the bourgeoisie in each and every one of its acts, no matter how democratic and humanitarian they may seem, is first of all and most of all protecting its class interests, the interest of "social peace," that is, the interests of suppressing and disarming all the oppressed classes. So the proletarian way of putting the question of peace differs just as inevitably and must differ from the bourgeois-democratic way of putting this question as is the case in relation to freedom of trade, anti-clericalism, etc. The proletariat fights and will always fight unswervingly against war, not forgetting, however, for a minute that the elimination of wars



is possible only alongside the complete elimination of the division of society into classes. . . .

From "European Capital and the Autocracy"  
(published in *Vperyod*, No. 13, April 5, 1905).

The approach of peace, or at least the intense discussion of the question of peace by certain bourgeois elements, not accidentally, but inevitably gave rise to a particularly marked divergence between the two policies. Bourgeois pacifists and their "socialist" imitators, or followers, have always pictured, and now picture, peace as being something in principle distinct from war, for the pacifists of both shades have never understood that "war is the continuation of the politics of peace and peace is the continuation of the politics of war." Neither the bourgeoisie nor the social-chauvinists wanted, nor do they wish to see that the imperialist war of 1914-17 is the continuation of the imperialist politics of 1898-1914, if not of an earlier period. Neither the bourgeois pacifists nor the socialist pacifists see that if the bourgeois governments are not overthrown by revolution peace *now* can only be an imperialist peace, a continuation of the imperialist war.

From "Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism" (January 1, 1917).



This example,<sup>1</sup> it seems to me, deserves particular attention, because it shows us clearly something now forgotten at every step by bourgeois newspapermen when they play on the prejudices and the philistine ignorance of the quite undeveloped masses, who do not understand this indissoluble economic and historical connection between every war and the policy preceding it of each country, each class that was in power before the war and achieved its aims by so-called "peaceful" means. So-called because the ruthless methods required, for example, to ensure "peaceful" domination over the colonies, can hardly be called peaceful.

Peace prevailed in Europe, but continued because the European peoples' domination over hundreds of millions of colonial inhabitants was effected by constant, uninterrupted, never-ending wars which we, Europeans, do not consider to be wars, because all too often they resembled not wars, but the most brutal slaughter, extermination of unarmed peoples.

From "War and Revolution"  
(May 14, 1917).

---

<sup>1</sup> Here Lenin refers to the revolution and war of the French people at the end of the eighteenth century. — *Ed.*

Absolutely everybody is in favour of peace in general, including Kitchener, Joffre, Hindenburg, and Nicholas the Bloody, for *every one* of them wishes to end the war. The trouble is that every one of them advances imperialist (i.e., predatory in relation to other peoples), oppressive peace conditions for the benefit of "his" nation. Slogans must be advanced in order to make clear to the masses, by means of propaganda and agitation, the irreconcilable difference between Socialism and capitalism (imperialism); they must not be advanced in order to *reconcile* two hostile classes and two hostile political lines by means of a little word which "unites" the most divergent things.

From "The Peace Question"  
(July-August 1915).

**KAUTSKY COVERED UP THE CLASS CHARACTER OF  
WAR AND PEACE AND JOINED THE BOURGEOISIE**

Kautsky vacillates on the question of the character and significance of the present war in an astonishing manner, and this party leader evades the precise and formal declarations of the Basle and Chemnitz congresses as carefully as a thief avoids

the place of his last theft. In his pamphlet, *The National State, etc.*, written in February 1915, Kautsky asserted that "still, in the last analysis," the war is an "imperialist one." (P.64.) Now, a new reservation is introduced: not a *purely* imperialist one. What else can it be?

From "The Collapse of the Second International" (latter half of May and first half of June 1915).

Such simple-mindedness on the part of the bourgeois economists is not surprising; moreover, it is in their *interest* to pretend to be so naive and to talk "seriously" about peace under imperialism. But what remains of Kautsky's Marxism, when, in 1914, 1915 and 1916, he takes up the same bourgeois-reformist point of view and affirms that "everybody is agreed" (imperialists, pseudo-Socialists and social-pacifists) on the matter of peace? Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist "pious wish" to wave them aside, to evade them.

From "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-June 1916).

Kautsky quite meaninglessly "reconciles" the fundamental idea of social-chauvinism, the defence of the fatherland in this war, with a diplomatic sham concession to the Left, such as abstaining from voting appropriations, verbal expression of opposition, etc. Kautsky, who in 1909 wrote a book predicting the approach of a revolutionary period and discussing the relation between war and revolution, Kautsky, who in 1912 signed the Basle Manifesto on revolutionary utilization of the coming war, now justifies and embellishes social-chauvinism in every way. Like Plekhanov, he joins the bourgeoisie in ridiculing the very idea of revolution, in repudiating every step towards immediate revolutionary struggle.

From "Socialism and War"  
(July-August 1915).



### **III. THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES CONSISTENTLY STAND FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**

#### **THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES SYSTEMATICALLY CARRY ON A POLICY OF PEACE**

The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of November 6-7 (October 24-25) and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

By a just, or democratic, peace, for which the vast majority of the working and toiling classes of all belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving, a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy — by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and indemnities.



The government of Russia calls upon all the belligerent nations to conclude such a peace immediately, and expresses its readiness to take the most resolute measures without the least delay, pending the final ratification of the conditions of this peace by plenipotentiary assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

. . . . .

The government considers that it would be the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war for the purpose of dividing up among the strong and rich nations the feeble nationalities seized by them, and solemnly declares its determination to sign immediately conditions of peace terminating this war on the conditions indicated, which are equally just for all peoples without exception.

From "The Second All-Russian Congress of  
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies,  
Report on the Peace Question" (October 26,  
1917).

The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of November 6-7 (October 24-25) and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must begin immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be directed

both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to interfere in the question of war and peace. . . . We are combating the duplicity of governments which in words talk of peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars.

Ibid.

The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic desires to live in peace with all peoples and direct all its energies to internal construction in order to firmly establish production, transport and social administration on the basis of the Soviet system, which up to now has been hampered by the interference of the Entente and the hunger blockade.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government proposed peace to the Entente powers several times, namely:

August 5, 1918, note of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the American representative, Mr. Poole;

October 24, 1918, to President Wilson;

November 3, 1918, to all the governments of the Entente through the representatives of neutral countries;

November 7, 1918, in the name of the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets;

December 23, 1918, note of Litvinov in Stockholm to all representatives of the Entente;

Then the notes of January 12, January 17, and February 4, 1919 and the draft agreement with Bullitt of March 12, 1919 and the note of May 7, 1919 through Nansen.

Fully approving all the repeated steps of the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, the Seventh Congress of Soviets again affirms its unswerving striving for peace and again proposes to all the powers of the Entente: England, France, the United States of America, Italy, Japan, together and separately to begin immediately negotiations for peace and entrusts the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to continue systematically this peaceful policy (or: to systematically

continue this peaceful policy, taking all necessary measures for its success).

From "The Draft Resolution on the Question of International Policy for the Eighth All-Russian Conference of the R. C. P. (B.)" (December 2, 1919).

3. In relation to the United States and Japan we pursue first of all the political aim of repelling their insolent, criminal, predatory invasion of Russia, which serves the enrichment of their capitalists alone. To both these states we have often and solemnly proposed peace, but they have not even answered us and continue the war against us, helping Denikin and Kolchak, looting Murmansk and Archangel, ravaging and ruining, in particular, Eastern Siberia, where Russian peasants are putting up a heroic resistance against the robber-capitalists of Japan and the United States of North America.

Our further political and economic aim in relation to all peoples, the United States and Japan among them—is one: fraternal alliance with the workers and toiling people of all countries without exception.

From "Reply to Questions Put by an American Correspondent" (July 20, 1919).



But is such a thing in general conceivable, that a socialist republic should exist in a capitalist encirclement? It seemed inconceivable in either the political or the military sense. That it is possible in the political and military sense has been proved, it is already a fact. And in the sense of trade? And in the sense of economic exchange? And how about ties, aid, exchange of services between backward, ruined, agricultural Russia and the advanced industrially wealthy group of capitalist powers — are these possible? Did they not threaten that they would surround us with barbed wire, with the result that no economic relations could exist at all? "War didn't scare them, so we'll get them by blockade."

Comrades, we have seen many threats during these four years, such terrible threats that none of them can scare us. As to the blockade, experience has shown that it is not certain for whom it is harder: for those who are blockaded or those who do the blockading.

From "On the Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic, Report to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (December 23, 1921).



## 2. Our plans in Asia?

The same as in Europe: peaceful coexistence with the peoples, with the workers and peasants of all nations that are awakening to a new life, a life without exploitation, without landlords, without capitalists, without merchants. The imperialist war of 1914-18, a war of the capitalists of the Anglo-French (and Russian) group against the capitalists of the German-Austrian group for a division of the world, awakened Asia and, as in all other areas, intensified the movement for freedom, peaceful labour and prevention of future wars.

## 3. The basis of peace with America?

Let the American capitalists keep their hands off us. We won't touch them. We are ready even to pay them in gold for machines, tools and other things useful for transport and production. Yes, and not only in gold, but in raw materials.

From "Reply to a Correspondent of the  
*New York Evening Journal*" (February 18,  
1920).

So long as there are not, on the part of any of the nationalities, any intrigues against us that bind these nationalities, that imperialistically enslave them, so long as they do not serve as a bridge for strangling

us, we will not be deterred by formalities. We will not forget that we are revolutionaries. But there are facts which prove irrefutably, unquestionably, that even the smallest nationality that is armed with nothing, no matter how weak it might be, can absolutely be, and must be, confident in the Russia that has defeated the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries that we have nothing but peaceful intentions towards it, that our propaganda about the criminal nature of the old policy of the old governments is not weakening, and that our desire to maintain peace at all costs, at the cost of immense sacrifices and concessions, with all the nationalities which were formerly in the Russian empire but did not wish to stay with us, remains firm. This we have proved. And however fierce the curses that are showered on us from all sides, this we shall continue to prove. We consider that we have given excellent proof of this, and we will say, before this gathering of the workers and peasants of all Russia, before the entire many-millioned worker and peasant masses of Russia, that we will make every effort to guard peace in the future, that we will not balk at bigger concessions and sacrifices to defend this peace.

But there is a limit beyond which one must not go. We will not permit the flouting of peace treaties, will not permit efforts to disrupt our peaceful labour. We will not permit this under any circumstances, and will stand up as one man to defend our existence.

From "On the Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic, Report to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (December 23, 1921).

**TO FORBID MAKING ANY PEACE AT ALL WITH  
IMPERIALISTS IS AN UNSOUND VIEW**

Maybe the authors believe that the interests of the international revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it. It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The unsoundness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petro-

grad opponents of peace) strikes the eye. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this viewpoint, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

Maybe the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *jogged*, and that it can be jogged only by war — and in no case by peace, which might give the masses the impression that imperialism was being “legalized”? Such a “theory” would be completely at variance with Marxism, which has always been opposed to “jogging” revolutions, which develop as the acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions ripens.

From “Strange and Monstrous” (published in *Pravda*, Nos. 37 and 38, February 28 and March 1, 1918).

Germany got nothing from the Brest peace except a few million poods of grain but carried Bolshevik demoralization into Germany. We, however, gained time in the course of which the Red Army began to take shape. Even the gigantic calamities in the Ukraine proved to be curable though at a difficult and heavy cost. What our opponents counted



on — the swift crack-up of the Soviet power in Russia — didn't ensue. It was that very time which history gave us as a breathing space that we used to consolidate ourselves so that we could not be taken by military force. We gained tempo, we gained a little time and only gave for this a great deal of space. Then, one recalls, people philosophized that in order to gain time it is necessary to give up space. As regards the theory of the philosophers about time and space we acted in both a practical and political way: we gave up a lot of space but we gained time during which we could get stronger. After that when all the imperialists wanted to advance on us in a big war, it turned out that this was — impossible, they had neither the means nor the strength for a big war. At that time we did not sacrifice our basic interests; we gave up our secondary and preserved our basic interests.

Here, by the way, there arises the question of opportunism. Opportunism consists in sacrificing basic interests while making temporary, partial gains. Here, if one takes the theoretical definition of opportunism, is the essence. Many have gone astray on this. At the peace of Brest we sacrificed precisely those interests of Russia, as they are understood in the



patriotic sense, which were secondary from the point of view of Socialism. We made gigantic sacrifices, but still they were sacrifices of secondary things.

From "Speech at a Meeting of the Activists  
of the Moscow Organization of the R.C.P.  
(B.)" (December 6, 1920).

Brest is significant in that for the first time on a gigantically large scale, among difficulties that were boundless, we succeeded in utilizing the contradictions between the imperialists so that, in the end, Socialism was the gainer. During Brest there were two gigantically strong groups of imperialist beasts of prey: the German-Austrian and the Anglo-American-French. They were engaged in a furious struggle which was to decide for the immediate future the fate of the world. If we held out while being zero in a military sense, having nothing, and heading everywhere in a descending line to the depths of ruin in an economic sense, if we held out, then this miracle took place only because we correctly utilized the dissension between German and American imperialism. We made the most immense concession to German imperialism and by making a

concession to one imperialism, we at one stroke protected ourselves from being victimized by both imperialisms.

Ibid.

By now only an utter idiot can fail to see that we were not only right in overthrowing our bourgeoisie (and its lackeys, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), but were also right in concluding the Brest-Litovsk Peace *after* our open appeal for universal peace, backed by the publication and annulment of the secret treaties, had been rejected by the bourgeoisie of the Entente. Firstly, if we had not concluded the Brest-Litovsk Peace, we would at once have surrendered the power to the Russian bourgeoisie and thus have done untold damage to the world socialist revolution. Secondly, at the price of *national* sacrifices, we preserved such an *international* revolutionary influence that today we have Bulgaria directly imitating us, Austria and Germany in a state of ferment, *both* imperialist systems weakened, while we have grown stronger and have *begun* to create a real proletarian army.

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the  
Renegade Kautsky" (October 9, 1918).

**THE CAPITALISTS WILL SEEK PRETEXTS FOR  
MAKING WAR AND WE MUST BE  
PREPARED FOR ANY EVENTUALITY**

I said at that meeting, that was reported so unfortunately in *Pravda*, that we have now passed from war to peace, but we have not forgotten that war will come again. While capitalism remains and there is Socialism, they cannot live peacefully: either one or the other will be victorious in the end; funeral services will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism. This is a respite in the war. The capitalists will seek pretexts for making war.

From "Speech at a Meeting of the Activists  
of the Moscow Organization of the R.C.P.  
(B.)" (December 6, 1920).

The result is that our international position is now more stable than ever. But we must watch the international crisis with extreme care and be prepared for any eventuality. . . . Knowing that our enemy is in desperate straits, that our enemy does not know what he wants to do or what he will do tomorrow, we must tell ourselves quite definitely that in spite of the peace overtures, war is possible. It is impossible to foretell what their future conduct will be. . . .

That military preparations are under way, of that there is not the slightest doubt. Many of the states bordering on Russia — and perhaps many of those not bordering on Russia — are now arming. That is why we must manoeuvre so flexibly in our international policy and adhere so firmly to the course we have taken, and be prepared for anything. We have waged the war for peace with extreme vigour. This war is yielding splendid results. We have made a very good showing in this sphere of the struggle, at any rate, not inferior to the showing in the sphere of activities of the Red Army, on the front where blood is shed. But the conclusion of peace with us does not depend on the will of the small states even if they desire it. They are up to their ears in debt to the countries of the Entente, who are wrangling and competing desperately among themselves. We must therefore remember that peace is of course possible from the point of view of the world situation, the historical situation created by the civil war and by the war against the Entente.

But the measures we take for peace must be accompanied by most intense military preparations, and in no case must our army be disarmed. Our army offers a real guarantee that the imperialist



powers will not make the slightest attempt or encroachment on us; for although they might count on certain ephemeral successes at first, not one of them would escape defeat at the hands of Soviet Russia. That we must realize, that must be made the basis of our agitation and propaganda, that is what we must prepare for, in order to solve the problem which, in view of our growing exhaustion, compels us to combine the one with the other.

From "Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Report of the Central Committee" (March 29, 1920).

The important thing for us is to establish that an unstable equilibrium exists, and that we must take advantage of this respite, taking into consideration the characteristic features of the present situation, adapting our tactics to the specific features of this situation, and not forgetting for a moment that the necessity for an armed struggle may suddenly arise again. As hitherto, the organization of the Red Army, its reinforcement, remains our task.

From "Tactics of the Russian Communist Party, Report to the Third Congress of the Communist International" (July 5, 1921).



#### **IV. PEACE CAN BE WON ONLY BY STRUGGLE**

**WHOEVER THINKS THAT THE BOURGEOISIE WOULD  
BRING PEACE TO US ON A PLATTER IS A  
COMPLETELY NAIVE PERSON**

Against war caused by the collision of beasts of prey over spoils, we have begun a resolute struggle. All parties up to now have talked about this struggle, but have not gone beyond words and hypocrisy. Now, the struggle for peace has begun. This struggle is hard. Whoever thought that peace can be achieved easily, that one has only to start mentioning peace for the bourgeoisie to bring it to us on a platter, is a completely naive person. Whoever attributed this view to the Bolsheviks was cheating people. The capitalists are locked in mortal struggle over the division of spoils. Clearly: to kill war means to defeat capital, and in this sense the Soviet state power has begun the struggle.

From "Speech at the First All-Russian  
Congress of the Naval Deputies" (November  
22, 1917).

## OBSTACLES TO PEACE ARE ON THE SIDE OF IMPERIALISM

### 4. Obstacles to such a peace?

There are none on our side. On the side of the American (as with any other) capitalists — imperialism.

From "Reply to a Correspondent of the  
*New York Evening Journal*" (February 13,  
1920).

The world has had more than its share of pacifist phrases, professions and assurances — even of solemn pledges against war and against peace — but in most countries, and especially in the modern civilized countries, there has been all too little readiness to take effective steps, even the simplest, to ensure peace. Yet, on this and similar issues we wish to see a minimum of general statements, solemn pledges and florid formulae, and a maximum of simple, clear decisions and measures that would really lead to peace, or, better still, to complete removal of the danger of war.

From "Answers to Questions Put by M.S.  
Farbman, Correspondent of the *Observer*  
and *Manchester Guardian*" (October 27,  
1922).

**WHEN YOU BEAT THE ENEMY HE WANTS  
TO COME TO TERMS**

We are fighting against international capital, which, on seeing our republic, said, "These are robbers, reptiles" (these are literally the very words that were conveyed to me by an English sculptress who heard them uttered by one of the most influential politicians). And since they are reptiles one can only treat them with contempt. This was the voice of international capital. It was the voice of the class enemy, and from his point of view he was right. But the correctness of such conclusions has to be tested. We said: If you are a mighty world power, if you are world capital, if you say "Reptile" and have all the powers of technique at your command, go on, shoot! And when it did, it found that it had hurt itself more than us. After that, capital, which is compelled to reckon with real political and economic life, says, "We must trade." This is where we have achieved a great victory.

From "Report on the Substitution of a Tax  
in Kind for the Surplus-Appropriation  
System, Delivered at the 10th Congress of  
the R.C.P. (B.)" (March 15, 1921).

And although international capital is growing feebler every day, and our international position has recently extraordinarily improved, yet if all the circumstances of the case are soberly weighed it must be admitted that international capital is undoubtedly still stronger than we are. It now cannot wage direct war on us, for its wings have been clipped. Quite recently these gentlemen have begun to say in the European bourgeois press: "It looks as if we may get stuck in Russia, perhaps it would be better to come to terms with her." That is always the case: when you beat the enemy he wants to come to terms. We have repeatedly told these gentlemen the European imperialists that we were willing to make peace; but they dreamed of enslaving Russia. Now they have come to understand that their dreams are not destined to be realized.

From "Speech Delivered at the First All-Russian Conference on Party Work in the Rural Districts" (November 18, 1919).

The international position of the R.S.F.S.R. at the present moment is distinguished by a certain equilibrium, which, although it is extremely unstable, has nevertheless given rise to a peculiar state of affairs in world politics.



What constitutes this peculiarity is that, on the one hand, the international bourgeoisie is filled with furious hatred of, and hostility towards, Soviet Russia, and is prepared at any moment to fling itself upon her in order to strangle her. On the other hand, all attempts at military intervention, which have cost the international bourgeoisie hundreds of millions of francs, have ended in complete failure, in spite of the fact that the Soviet regime was then weaker than it is now and that the Russian landlords and capitalists had whole armies on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. The opposition to the war on Soviet Russia has greatly gained in strength in all capitalist countries; it is adding fuel to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and extending to very wide sections of the petty-bourgeois democracy. The conflict of interests between the various imperialist countries has become acute, and is growing more acute every day. The revolutionary movement among the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples of the East is growing with remarkable vigour. The result of all these conditions is that international imperialism has proved itself unable to strangle Soviet Russia, although it is far stronger than she is, and has been obliged for the time being to grant her



recognition, or semi-recognition, and to conclude trade agreements with her.

The result is a state of equilibrium which, although extremely unstable and uncertain, enables the Socialist Republic to exist — not for long, of course — within the capitalist encirclement.

From "Theses of Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party to the Third Congress of the Communist International (Preliminary Draft)" (June 13, 1921).

#### **THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE MUST BE LINKED WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE**

And the millions who are pondering over the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war are more and more clearly realizing the grim and inexorable truth that it is impossible to escape imperialist war, and imperialist world (if the old orthography were still in use, I would have written the word *mir*, in both its meanings)<sup>1</sup> which in-

---

<sup>1</sup> In Russian the word *mir* has two meanings: "peace" and "world"; in the old Russian orthography they were spelt differently.—Tr.

evitably engenders imperialist war, it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution.*

Let the bourgeoisie and the pacifists, the generals and burghers, the capitalists and philistines, the pious Christians and the Knights of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals vent their fury against that revolution. No torrents of abuse, calumnies and lies can enable them to conceal the world-historic fact that for the first time in hundreds and thousands of years the slaves have replied to a war among the slave-owners by openly proclaiming the slogan: "Convert this war among the slave-owners for the division of their loot into a war of the slaves of all nations against the slave-owners of all nations."

For the first time in hundreds and thousands of years that slogan has grown from a vague and pious hope into a clear and definite political programme, into an effective struggle waged by millions of oppressed people led by the proletariat; it has grown into the first victory of the proletariat, the **first** victory in the struggle to abolish war and to unite the workers of all countries against the united bourgeoisie of various countries; against the bourgeoisie that makes peace and war at the expense of the

slaves of capital, the wage-workers, the peasants, the toilers.

From "The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution" (October 14, 1921).

The workers of the whole world, irrespective of the country they live in, greet us, sympathize with us and applaud us for having broken the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains; for having broken through to freedom, even at the cost of tremendous sacrifice; for having, as a socialist republic, even though torn and plundered by the imperialists, *got out* of the imperialist war and for having hoisted in the sight of the whole world the banner of peace, the banner of Socialism.

From "A Letter to American Workers" (August 20, 1918).

It turned out that although we did not receive the rapid, direct, first-hand support from the toiling masses of the whole world on which we had counted, and which we had put as the basis of our whole policy, we did, however, receive support of another kind—support that was not direct, support that was not rapid—to such an extent that it was precisely this support, precisely the sympathy for us of the toiling masses—

both the worker and peasant masses — of the whole world, even in the powers most hostile to us, precisely this support and this sympathy were the final, most decisive source, the decisive reason for the fact that all the invasions directed against us ended in collapse, that the alliance of the toilers of all countries, which we had proclaimed, was secured and within our country established, and that it exerted an influence on all countries. However shaky this support may be, while capitalism exists in other countries (this we must of course clearly see and straightforwardly admit), however shaky all this support may be, it must be said that one can already rely on it. This sympathy and support has counted in the sense that the invasion to which we were subjected in the course of three years and which had caused us unprecedented ruin and suffering, has become, I would not say impossible — on this score it is necessary to be very careful and circumspect — but at any rate has been made immensely more difficult for our enemies. And this is what, in the final analysis, explains that strange, at first glance uncomprehensible, situation which we see today.

From "On the Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic, Report to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (December 23, 1921).



If Socialism does not win victory, peace between capitalist states will mean only a truce, an interval, preparation for a new slaughter of the peoples. Peace and bread — these are the basic demands of the workers and the exploited. The war has intensified this demand to an extreme degree. The war has plunged the most civilized, most culturally developed countries into starvation. But on the other hand, the war as a tremendous historical process has accelerated social development in an unprecedented way. Capitalism, which had developed into imperialism, i.e., into monopoly capitalism, has been transformed, under the influence of the war, into state-monopoly capitalism. We have now arrived at this stage of the development of the world economy, and it is the immediate threshold of Socialism.

For that reason the socialist revolution that has broken out in Russia represents only the start of the world socialist revolution. Peace and bread, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, revolutionary remedies for the healing of the wounds inflicted by war, the complete victory of Socialism — these are the aims of the struggle.

From "For Bread and Peace"  
(December 14, 1917).

**V. THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
IS AN ACTIVE FACTOR IN THE STRUGGLE  
FOR PEACE AND FOR THE OVER-  
THROW OF IMPERIALISM**

We know that the popular masses of the East will rise as independent actors, as builders of a new life, because hundreds of millions of people in the East belong to dependent, subject nations, which until now were objects of international imperialist policy, and which for capitalist culture and civilization existed only as manure. And when they talk of handing out mandates for the administration of colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder — handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe. That majority, which before had been completely outside the orbit of historical progress, because it could not represent an independent revolutionary force, ceased, as we know, to play that

passive role at the beginning of the twentieth century. We know that 1905 was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, and that a revolutionary movement developed in India. The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarize themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply an object of enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of development of the world revolution — which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort — that in the revolutionary

struggle, in the revolutionary movement, you will be called upon to play a big part and in this struggle merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people are for the first time stirring into independent motion and will be an active factor in the struggle for the overthrow of international imperialism.

From "Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East" (November 22, 1919).

And in the event of the "Great" Powers becoming extremely exhausted in the present war, or in the event of a victorious revolution in Russia, national wars, even victorious ones, are quite possible. On the one hand, intervention by the imperialist powers is *not* possible under all circumstances. On the other hand, when people argue haphazardly that a war waged by a small state against a giant state is hopeless, we must say that a hopeless war is war nevertheless, and, moreover, certain events within



the "giant" states — for example, the beginning of a revolution — may transform a "hopeless" war into a very "hopeful" one.

From "The Pamphlet by Junius"  
(July 1916).

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority of the population that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for its emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the final victory of Socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

From "Better Fewer, But  
Better" (March 2, 1923).

## **VI. SOCIALIST SOCIETY ALONE WILL SAVE MANKIND FROM WARS**

The imperialist war, the war of the biggest and richest banking firms of Britain and Germany, this war which is being waged for the division of spoils, for the robbery of small and weak peoples, this terrible, this criminal war which has ruined all countries, exhausted all peoples — this war faces mankind with the dilemma: either sacrifice all culture or throw off the yoke of capitalism by revolutionary means, eliminate the domination of the bourgeoisie and win a socialist society and lasting peace.

From "For Bread and Peace"  
(December 14, 1917).

Finally, our "peace programme" must explain that the imperialist powers and the imperialist bourgeoisie *cannot* grant a democratic peace. Such a peace *must* be sought and fought for, *not in the past, not* in a reactionary utopia of a *non-imperialist* capitalism, nor in a league of equal nations *under* capital-

ism, but *in the future*, in the socialist revolution of the proletariat. Not a single fundamental democratic demand can be achieved to any considerable extent, or any degree of permanency, in the advanced imperialist states, except *by way of* revolutionary battles under the banner of Socialism.

Whoever promises the nations a "democratic" peace without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it — the struggle which must be carried on now, during the war — is deceiving the proletariat.

From "The 'Peace Programme'" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 52, March 25, 1916).

The proletariat must retaliate to the war by propaganda, and by preparing and carrying out revolutionary mass actions for the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie, for the conquest of political power and the achievement of socialist society, which alone will save mankind from wars; and the determination to achieve it is maturing in the minds of the workers of *all* countries with unprecedented rapidity.

From "The Tasks of the Left Zimmerwaldists in the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland" (from late October to early November 1916).





列宁論战争与和平

\*

外文出版社出版(北京)

1960年9月第一版 1960年10月第二版

编号: (英)3050—395





